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THE GULL

GOLDEN GATE AUDUBON SOCIETY NEWSLETTER VOL. 88 NO. 3

MARCH 2003

FOUNDED 1917

A Wetland Success Story in the Oakland Estuary

by Jacqui Smalley

Our collaborative project to restore wetland on the Oakland Estuary is nearly complete. A year ago when GGAS co-hosted a 2002 Earth Day clean-up on this site—together with SF Baykeeper, Fifth Avenue Neighborhood Association and the Port of Oakland—the project was still on the drafting board, and the site was highly degraded. Next month, when we sponsor another clean-up of debris swept in by the tide, we will celebrate Earth Day 2003 at the newly restored tidal basin.

This project not only restores a tidal wetland, providing needed safe harbor for disappearing species of shorebirds and migratory birds, it also demonstrates how environmentalists, community groups and a government agency can work together.

Following an accidental oil spill at the site in March of 2000 and the failure of the Port of Oakland to act quickly to clean up or mitigate the pollution, a representative of the Fifth Avenue Neighborhood Association, Patty St. Louis, contacted Golden Gate Audubon and the SF Baykeeper. Subsequently, the State Regional Quality Water Board fined the Port of Oakland.

The Port could simply have paid the fine and been finished with the matter. Instead, it responded to its neighbors

and to the environmental organizations that lobbied for restoration of the shoreline. The four-acre beach, located near Fifth Avenue and the Embarcadero in Oakland, is one of the last remaining edges of natural shoreline on the entire length of the Oakland Estuary, extending from the western-most tip of Alameda to San Leandro Bay. Along this shoreline are tidally exposed mudflats, salt marsh areas supporting well-established growths of cord grass and salt grass, and wetland transition areas. Conditions range from moderate to high-quality to degraded.

Brown pelicans, double-crested cormorants, egrets, black crowned night herons, herons, mallards, willets, sandpipers and sanderlings are among the many birds that visit the area. The intensity of use by avian wildlife may be due, in part, to its prox-

imity to the heavily used waterfowl flight path over the Lake Merritt Channel between the estuary and Lake Merritt.

GGAS requested help from the Coastal Conservancy of California in obtaining consultants to create a restoration plan. The Conservancy, in turn, contacted Philip Williams & Assoc., Consultants in Hydrology to do a preliminary plan. After many months of testing for toxics—which would have made restoration difficult if not impossible—the site was finally cleared. The Port of Oakland and all of the other parties liked the plan. And, in spite of the fact that the cost to implement the plan would exceed the fine imposed, the Port decided to go ahead. As a result, nearly an acre of habitat has



View of the Clinton Basin restoration site.

The GGAs annual report from July 2001 to June 2002 is available by calling the office at 510.843.2222 or visiting our Web site at www.goldengateaudubon.org.

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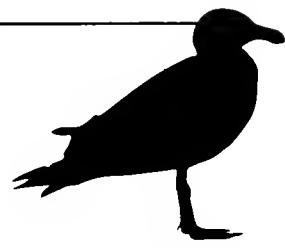
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FIELD TRIPS

Susan Groves



Arrowhead Marsh

Alameda County

Saturday, March 1



We will meet at the end of Edgewater Dr. and walk over to Arrowhead Marsh. Follow Hwy. 880 and exit at Hegenberger Rd., towards Oakland airport. Take the first right turn onto Edgewater and drive all the way to the end. Meet at the EBRP parking lot at Garretson Point at 9 a.m. We should expect to see many shorebirds and ducks, raptors, Clapper Rail, Red Knot and more. Bring scope if you have one. All levels of birders welcome. Heavy rain cancels. Leader: Rusty Scalf 510.666.9936; rscalf@jps.net.

Birding for Families at Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Saturdays, March 1, April 5

Meet at 9 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way) for this regular first Saturday of the month bird and nature hike through the exciting micro-habitats of Strybing Arboretum. Arrive 15 minutes early to see



For carpool coordination, call Susan Groves at 510.654.5954 if you can share a ride or if you need a ride.

[\\$] trips go to parks or other sites which require an entrance fee.

If you need information and have difficulty reaching a field trip leader, if you have suggestions for trips, or if you are interested in leading a trip, call Susan Groves, Field Trips Committee Chair.

exhibits—beaks, bones, feathers, nests. Ages 7 and older. Trip ends at 11 a.m. Bring binoculars, small notebook and pencil. Leaders: San Francisco Nature Education Leaders Nancy DeStefanis, Angie Geiger, Scott Walker and Strybing Arboretum Docent Darin Dawson. Sponsored by GGAS, Strybing Arboretum and San Francisco Nature Education 415.876.5220; myblueherons@yahoo.com.

Strybing Arboretum

San Francisco

Sundays, March 2, April 6

Meet at 8 a.m. at the front gate of the Arboretum (9th Ave. and Lincoln Way). See February 2003 *Gull* for details. GGAS co-leaders: Allan Ridley, Rick Ferrick; Strybing Arboretum Docents: Helen McKenna, Linda Lyons. 415.566.3241.

East Bay Shoreline Bike Trip

Sunday, March 9

An all-day bicycle trip along the East Bay Shoreline on the Bay Trail from Aquatic Park in Berkeley to Richmond Marina Bay, including the Albany Crescent and Point Isabel, with a possible extension to The Miller Knox Regional Shoreline in Richmond. Meet at the south end of Aquatic Park at Bay and Potter Sts. at 9:15 a.m. Shore birds, ducks, and more. The leaders will return by bicycle along the Bay Trail mid-to late afternoon, but it is possible to return by BART. Directions: From San Pablo Ave. in Berkeley just south of Ashby Ave., turn west toward the bay on 67th St., then right on Bay St. (the

extension of Shellmound St. in Emeryville) just past the train tracks and go straight to the end, past Potter St., to a small parking lot on the right. Watch out for busy traffic. There are also entrances to Aquatic Park from Bancroft Way and Addison Way; bicycle south to the parking lot mentioned above. (Access is restricted because of nearby train tracks.) There is a small store/cafe at Richmond Marina Bay where food/drink may be purchased. Bring sun screen, lunch and liquids. Helmets required. Rain cancels. Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233; kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com.

Honey Lake and Greater Sage-Grouse

Saturday-Sunday, March 15-16

We will search Lassen County for Greater Sage-Grouse, Bald Eagles and other wintering birds of the Eastern Sierra. Trip is limited to the first 20 participants who sign up with the leader after January 31. Detailed directions provided to confirmed attendees. Lodging is available in Susanville; primitive camping is available in the Honey Lake State Wildlife Area. Bring warm clothing, lunches for both days, and a scope if you have one. Leader: Dave Quady 510.704.9353; davequady@worldnet.att.net.

Birds and Blossoms

Richardson Bay
Wildlife Sanctuary,
Marin County

Saturday, March 15

Gather your children, pack a snack and head to the Tiburon Audubon Center for a guided family nature walk, birdsong and showy wildflowers. Trip is from

2-3:30 p.m. Take Hwy. 101 to the Tiburon Exit. Turn toward Tiburon on Tiburon Blvd. After approx. 1 mile, turn right onto Greenwood Cove Rd. A sign will say Richardson Bay Audubon Center Sanctuary. Park on the street. Beginning birders welcome. A limited supply of binoculars available; please request when making a reservation. Limited space available. For more information and to RSVP, call Sharon Barnett, Education Specialist, 415.388.2524 ext. 107.

San Francisco Bird Blitz

Saturday, March 22

In this annual blitz we expect to tally over 100 different species within the city limits. This year we look to exceed all previous records. Meet at 7 a.m. at the north end of Van Ness Ave. (past North Point) at the foot of Municipal Pier. From there we will caravan to other sites including Golden Gate Park, Sutro Baths, Lake Merced and Candlestick Point. Bring snacks, lunch and liquids. We will bird until dusk, then adjourn to a restaurant for dinner to recap the day's observations. Leader: Alan Hopkins 415.644.0983; ash@sfo.com.

Elkhorn Slough &

Moss Landing

Monterey County

Saturday, March 29

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserves Visitor Center.[\$] From the Bay Area take Hwy. 101 south from San Jose. After the town of San Martin and before Gilroy, exit west on Hwy. 152 going toward Watsonville. From Watsonville, take G12 (Salinas Rd.) south to Elkhorn Road to the Reserve's Visitor's Center. Bring lunch or eat at nearby restaurants. At 2 p.m., meet at Moss Landing State Beach (directions from group leader that day). [\$] We'll finish about 4 p.m. Expect to see an abundance of land, sea and shorebirds. Great trip for all levels of birders. Leader: Bob Lewis 510.845.5001; Rlewis0727@aol.com.

Aquatic Park

San Francisco

Saturday, March 29

Meet at 9:30 a.m. at the foot of the Hyde Street Pier (Hyde & Jefferson) for this beginners bird walk. Discover birds next door to the urban environment. San Francisco Maritime Na-

tional Historical Park Ranger Carol Kiser will lead this approximately two-hour walk. Dress in layers. Trip is wheelchair accessible. 415.561.7100 or 561.7104.

Second GGAS Ohlone Wilderness Backpack Trip

Friday, May 2-

Monday, May 5

This is a very strenuous 20-mile hike over four days and

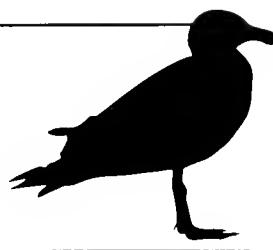
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Kathy Jarrett leads a bike/birding expedition along the San Leandro-Hayward Shoreline

PROGRAMS

Anne McTavish



The March membership programs promise to be interesting and entertaining. We meet socially at 7 p.m. Programs begin at 7:30 p.m. For more information about upcoming events or detailed directions to either program location, please see our Web page at www.goldengateaudubon.org/Chapter/programs.htm.

San Francisco

The San Francisco meetings are held at the County Fair building at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, 9th Avenue at Lincoln Way. Parking is available on the street or in the parking lot behind the building off Lincoln at 10th Ave.

Friday, March 14

Joe Morlan: "Workings of the California Bird Records Committee"
How does a sighting of a rarity become an accepted record? It's wonderful to see unusual birds, but being asked to document your sightings may be simultaneously exhilarating and painful. What are the chances our sightings will be accepted? If not accepted, do we have to remove them from our lists? How can we create submissions that have a good chance of being accepted? Can we, as birders, contribute to ornithological knowledge?

The purposes of the California Bird Records Committee include endorsing records of selected birds from the State of California and adjacent ocean, including, but not limited to, all such records submitted for publication to any official journal or checklist of the Western Field Ornithologists.

What does this mean? How does this happen? Joe Morlan—Ornithology Instructor,

author, and member of the CBRC—will give an insider's view of the workings of this important committee. For more information you may go to the CBRC Web page at www.wfo-cbrc.org/cbrc/ or you may visit Joe's Web page at <http://fog.ccsf.cc.ca.us/~jmoran>.

Berkeley

The Berkeley meetings are held at the Northbrae Community Church, 941 The Alameda, Berkeley (between Solano and Marin).

Thursday, March 20

Jay Withgott: "Biodiversity and Conservation in Sonora, Mexico"
Learn more about the interesting natural areas of this Mexican state just south of Arizona as Jay Withgott, freelance science writer and birder, shows slides of the flora, fauna and scenery of Sonora. It is not a well-known eco-tourist destination yet, but it's rapidly being "discovered." Sonora is Mexico's "frontier," sparsely populated, with some fabulous natural areas. Jay will showcase four areas/habitats:

- Sonoran desert
- Pinacate Biosphere Reserve—lava fields and sand dunes, a scenic, unique, highly isolated and little-known place just over the Mexican border.
- Sierra Madre—ruggedly gorgeous mountains along the Chihuahuan border, home of Tarahumara and other Indians, and a highly seasonal environment.
- Alamos tropical deciduous forest—this is the northernmost extent of the scrub forest that extends all the way to Guanacaste, Costa Rica. Only a few hundred miles south of the US border, the faunal turnover is striking, with dozens of tropical bird species occurring here that have never been recorded in the U.S.

Field Trips, continued from page 3

three campsites. See February 2003 *Gull* for details. Reservations necessary with a maximum of 12 people. Leader: Kathy Jarrett, 510.547.1233; kathy_jarrett@yahoo.com. [\$]

Yosemite's Bird Life

Friday-Sunday, June 13-15



The lower and middle elevations of Yosemite National Park are alive with singing birds in early June. A variety of habitats supports a rich diversity of bird life in full song and breeding plumage. Meet in the large parking lot just inside the Hwy. 120 (Big Oak Flat) entrance to the Park, 30 miles from Yosemite Valley, on Friday, June 13, at 3 p.m., and at 7 a.m. on Saturday, June 14, and Sunday, June 15. On Friday we will bird for a couple of hours and perhaps look for owls later. On Saturday we will bird all day and look for owls in the evening. (If you arrive later Saturday morning, meet the group in Hodgdon Meadow, below the Hodgdon Meadow Group Campsites.) On Sunday we will bird until about 3 p.m. Nearby campgrounds include Hodgdon Meadow and Crane Flat in the Park, reservations required (800) 436-7275, and Forest Service campgrounds Dimond O on Evergreen Road (the road to Hetch Hetchy), and Sweetwater on Hwy. 120. Lodging on or near Hwy. 120 includes Yosemite Westgate Motel (209)962-5281, Evergreen Lodge (209) 379-2606, Lee's Middle Fork (209) 962-7408, and Buck Meadows Lodge (209) 962-5281. Bring warm clothes, rainwear, rubber boots (wet meadows) and a large flashlight for owling. Bring a lunch and be prepared to walk about six miles on Saturday. Leaders: Dave Quady 510.704.9353 and Bob Lewis. [\$]



2002 Christmas Bird Count Results

By Clyde Morris and Joelle Buffa, Co-Compilers

It was a challenging day to be out birding. After weeks of rain, it was no surprise that wet and windy weather prevailed for almost the entire day of the count. But that didn't seem to dampen the enthusiasm of our volunteer counters. To our delight, every team but one covered their area. At the count dinner, each leader was enthusiastic and told how, despite the cold and rain, they and their team members had enjoyed themselves.

Not surprising, given the wet and windy weather, individual bird numbers were extremely low (69,070). This is barely 50 percent of 2001 Count numbers (128,517), and well below the prior 10-year average of 113,109. The number of species (170 on Count Day; 173 for Count Week) was slightly lower than average. Although we suspect that weather was the primary factor for low numbers, reduced coverage and effort were contributing factors. One of our boats, which usually covers the southern water portion (San Francisco Bay) of the Count Circle, did not go out. Some other groups had to end earlier than normal because of the weather. This partially explains unusually low numbers reported for **red-throated loon**, **surf scoter** and **ring-billed gull**. Unusually high numbers of **horned and eared grebes** contrasted with generally low **waterbird** numbers. Raptor

numbers were down, with unusually low numbers reported for **white-tailed kite**, **northern harrier** and **American kestrel**. **Starling** and **house sparrows** were also at all-time lows. On the positive side, **Townsend's warblers** continue their 10-year upward trend, with an all-time high of 134.

Unusual sightings were found despite the low numbers of birds seen. For the first time ever, **wild turkeys** were seen



Hermit Thrush, McLaren Park, San Francisco

A **short-eared owl** was seen by our canoeers in Arrowhead Marsh. This species has been seen in 12 of the past 28 years. Two groups saw **tree swallows** (at Cesar Chavez Park and at Lake Temescal), and this species was awarded the Best Bird Prize at the Count Dinner, having only been seen in four out of the previous 28 years. Close behind it as a rarity was the **black-throated gray warbler** seen at DeFemery Park, which has been seen in five out of the previous 28 years—including, oddly enough, four of the past five years. A **black-and-white warbler** was seen by Helen Green in her backyard. It has been seen on the count in only seven of the past 28 years.

Our feeder watchers are few but dedicated, often finding **white-throated sparrows** (two this year) and now finding the **black-and-white warbler**. They also contribute significantly to totals of some common birds.

For example, feeder watchers spotted almost all of the **pine siskins** (30 out of 34) seen on count day, and more than one-third of the total number of **California quail** (32 out of 80). We were even more astounded by the diversity reported by feeder watchers—43 different species! We appreciate the work they do watching their yards on Count Day and faithfully reporting their numbers each year. With all the rain and cold this

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and accepted as "naturally" occurring in the count circle. One turkey was seen at the Dunsmuir House. The caretaker at Dunsmuir said it and five other turkeys moved into the area this past year and were roaming the watershed each day. Another turkey seen during Count Week in a Berkeley neighborhood was reported to be hanging around for months. Turkeys have been expanding their range in the Oakland Hills and we were expecting them to be added to our Count species list for the past few years.

Help Save the Endangered California Least Tern

It's not often you get to help save an endangered species and have the most spectacular views in the Bay Area all at the same time. But that will be your reward for helping us save the endangered California Least Tern.

Golden Gate Audubon's Friends of the Alameda Wildlife Refuge committee (FAWR) is holding monthly work "parties" at the proposed Alameda National Wildlife Refuge. We invite you to join us and enjoy the unsurpassed views of the Bay, wildlife and San Francisco. You will see some great birds and at the same time help restore endangered species habitat. This 565-acre site is a marvelous refuge and it can only get better with your help as we begin the transformation of an airfield to a wildlife gem in central San Francisco Bay.

Our first goal is to insure that the endangered California Least Tern habitat areas are suitable for the 2003 nesting season. We will then clean the shoreline of winter storm and high tide debris that create risks to wildlife and human visitors. We will also restore life-supporting wetlands by removing invasive plant species and encourage native San Francisco Bay wetland vegetation, restoring the refuge to a more historical landscape.

Time: Every second Sunday of the month from 9 a.m. until noon.

What to bring: Gloves, layers of clothing, sturdy shoes, hat, sunscreen, water. Lunch optional.

On your first visit to our work parties, it is best to arrive punctually at 9 a.m. to get a bit of orientation and instructions on gate procedures. Once initiated you will be able to come and go freely.

Following our work we often have our lunch, visit and then do some birding around the refuge. We should be finished close to 1 p.m.

For more information and/or a map to the gate call Leora Feeney at 510.522.8525. Check the GGAS Web site for work party dates and a description of the work we will do. 



Volunteers at the Alameda Wildlife Refuge

It's Audubon Canyon Ranch Time Again

Want to enjoy a beautiful nature and birding site while helping others? Then please join our team of Audubon Canyon Ranch hosts.

Audubon Canyon Ranch (ACR) is a unique Great Blue heron and egret nursery overlooking Bolinas Lagoon. Thousands of visitors each year witness the birds nesting in the tops of redwood trees and enjoy the many miles of beautiful trails. We are looking for hosts to volunteer at ACR on weekends, greeting visitors and helping them enjoy their experience.

ACR is a conservation organization that now operates three sanctuaries in the North Bay—two in Marin and one in Sonoma County. It began in response to a plan to create a new residential community in Bolinas Lagoon. The Golden Gate, Marin and Sequoia Audubon Societies joined with local folks to defeat the proposal. Shortly after, the ACR Bolinas Preserve heron and egret rookery was purchased with the help of the Audubon Societies (we recently came across a tax paper that indicates that GGAS briefly owned the Bolinas Preserve before it was transferred to ACR). GGAS serves on the Board of ACR.

Each year from mid-March to mid-July the Bolinas Preserve is open weekends to visitors. The Bolinas Preserve gets thousands of visitors each year and we need volunteers

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Save The Quail Campaign Is Upgrading

By Alan Hopkins

The Save The Quail Campaign has truly moved into the twenty-first century! The Presidio Trust has recently posted the Save The Quail page on their Web site. And thanks to PRBO biologists Tom Gardali, Cody Martz and Jill Harley, most of the Presidio's quail are now wearing colored leg-bands. It is now possible to report your Presidio quail sightings on the Presidio Web site at www.presidiotrust.gov/quail. We are looking for any and all quail reports, but reports with the leg-band colors are extremely helpful. To make a report you will need a Quail Monitoring Map, which is available at these sites:

Crissy Field Community Environmental Center
603 Mason Street (corner of Mason Street and Halleck Street)
Open Wednesday through Sunday,
9 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Presidio Visitor Center
Inside the Presidio Officers' Club
50 Moraga Avenue, Main Post

Or phone the Presidio Trust's Natural Resource Specialist Damien Raffa at 415.561.4449. If you are not online, it is possible to get a hard copy of the Quail Report Form at the same locations.

Online quail reports may be just the high-tech beginning! GGAS program chair Anne McTavish and Rob Weinberg of the Crissy Field Community Environmental Center have introduced us to what looks to be the future of field notation through a pro-

gram called Cyber Tracker. Using GPS and PDA units makes it possible to gather and record complex information using a sequence of screens which display simple and easily recognizable icons. We will be testing out Cyber Tracker on our next Quail Counts, so please join us if you wish to learn more about it.

After some fine tuning over the last Presidio quail restoration days, "Quail Commons" is about done. With the Trust's approval of the Presidio Quail Recovery Plan, we have already started creating new habitat in other Presidio sites. In Golden Gate Park, many observers have reported that Strybing Arboretum's four male and three female quail are doing fine. Breeding season will soon be here. Any quail reports or help with habitat restoration will be greatly appreciated!

Save The Quail Work Days

March 15
April 19
May 17
June 21
July 19
August 16
September 13
October 18
November 15

Quail Count Days

May 3
June 28
September 6

For more information on these events contact Alan Hopkins 415.664.0983 or ash@sfo.com.

ACR, continued from page 6

to help direct them. Hosting is a lot of fun. ACR will send you the information you need to answer visitors' questions. You will be hosting with fellow GGAS members.

So please call our ACR-Host volunteer coordinator Bill Hering at 415.863.3625 and sign up for spring day at ACR's Bolinas Preserve. This year we are hosting on April 5, 6, 19, May 10, 11 (Mother's Day), 24, June 1, 7, 8 and July 5. We look forward to seeing you there! 

Oakland Estuary, continued from page 1

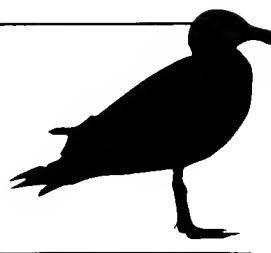
been restored, surrounded by four acres of undeveloped beach.

There is now a bird island separated at high tide from land, providing a safe haven for birds, and roosting sites where cormorants can sun themselves. Grasses and other native tidal marsh plants are currently growing in a greenhouse and will be planted in March. The surrounding acreage will be hydro-seeded with native wildflowers. A low gated fence around the restoration site will protect birds but still allow public access. Close to dense urban communities and schools, the Clinton Basin site is especially valuable because it allows Oaklanders of all ages to discover nature in their own backyard.

Join our Earth Day Celebration at the Clinton Basin in April 2003 and see for yourself the remarkable transformation that has taken place in the last 12 months. Details in the April Gull. 

OBSERVATIONS

January 1–31, 2003
Jay Withgott



The new year started out with a bang, and the birding stayed exciting all month. A Nutting's Flycatcher was found New Year's Day, and a Brown Booby on 2 Jan., leading an impressive string of rarities in the region. In January many California birders ventured to the Bay Area to sweep up the numerous unusual species that were sticking around — Canada Warbler in San Francisco; Brown Booby, Sedge Wren, Gray Catbird, and Tropical Kingbird in San Mateo Co.; Nutting's Flycatcher in Santa Cruz; and Rusty Blackbird in Sunnyvale. For much of the month it was possible, with some luck, to see all these birds in a single day.

It's a pleasure to have such a fun month to profile in what will, alas, be my final *Observations* column. Because new book-writing obligations are swamping me, and because I will soon be leaving the Bay Area and moving to Portland, Oregon, I am unable to continue the column. Instead, next month you'll be hearing from Bruce Mast, who will carry on the proud tradition. I look forward to Bruce's monthly accounts of our region's birdlife, and I know you will, too. It's been a pleasure — I thank you for your readership this past year. Now, on to the birds.

Loons to Ducks

A Red-necked Grebe continued at Calero Res., SCL, all month (mob), while others were in SF 1 Jan. (HC) and at Pigeon Pt., SM, 4 Jan. (RT). A Buller's Shearwater was spied from Half Moon Bay SB on the 3rd (DW).

A Manx Shearwater on Monterey Bay was one of several notable rarities in northern California outside of our nine-

county region; others included Emperor Goose, Lesser Black-backed Gull, and Black-throated Green Warbler in MTY, Broad-winged Hawk in MER and SCZ, Gray Catbird in SJO, Black-throated Blue Warbler in SCZ, Harris's Sparrow in PLA, and Common Grackle in SIS. The male Falcated Duck from last winter showed up again at Honey L. Wildlife Area, LAS, but kept in an inaccessible area.



Red-necked Grebe and nest.

Closer to home, the subadult **Brown Booby** (*Sula leucogaster*) found at Princeton Harbor, SM, on 2 Jan. (RT) was our region's prime highlight. The first wintertime record for northern California, this cooperative and charismatic bird remained throughout the month and spent much of each day roosting on a jetty within easily scope-able distance of the many birders who lined up at the end of the wharf to view it.

The month saw the usual winter smattering of uncommon geese and ducks. A "Common" (Eurasian Green-winged) Teal was at Stevens Cr., SCL, from the 21st on (DW; mob). Four Tufted Ducks wintered in MRN, SM, and SCZ, and 8 Long-tailed Ducks were found in SF, SOL, and MRN.

Raptors to Alcids

An astounding report was of a kettle of

28 Broad-winged Hawks over n. Berkeley on the 14th (YM); although details were not provided, there is one similar such winter record from MTY, and several observations of single Broad-wings were being made elsewhere at the time.

An annual survey of rails in the East Bay parks recorded its highest numbers ever, including 17 Clapper, 12 Sora, and 8 Virginia at Rohmer Sanctuary, Alameda, and a total of 66 rails at Arrowhead Marsh, ALA (MRz).

A Pacific Golden-Plover lingered into the new year at Stevens Cr., SCL (DW), and another appeared on the 4th-6th near Pigeon Pt., SM (RT; JH). Over 100 Mountain Plovers wintered as usual along Robinson Rd., SOL. Small numbers of Red Knots were noted in SM and SON (AE; DS; GS). And 8 Red Phalaropes leftover from December's storms lingered at Alviso until at least 8 Jan. (mob).

A 3rd-year **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (*Larus fuscus*) was a one-day wonder at Stevens Cr., SCL, on 26 Jan. (JD). At Fremont Lagoons, ALA/SCL, 3-4 Glaucous Gulls were reported on the 24th (BR, FV). However, the difficulty of identifying 1st-year Glaucous Gulls was brought home by a bird discovered last month in GGP, SF; after much discussion, consensus hovered around it being a hybrid.

Alcid reports were few; an Ancient Murrelet was seen from Pescadero on 4 Jan. (ADM).

Doves to Thrashers

A White-winged Dove winged by the San Matco coast on 11 Jan., seen independently by 2 observers (TC, DN). Short-eared Owls occurred in ones and twos in SON, SM, SCL, and ALA, while a Long-eared Owl was reported from the Bear Valley Visitors Center, PRNS, on the 19th (MMi). A Common Poorwill reportedly sat on a gravel road each evening for a week at Ano Nuevo SR, SM (JT, PMo).

A male Costa's Hummingbird was reported from Pescadero Marsh, SM, 5

Jan. (AR, EB), but was apparently not seen again. The first Allen's Hummingbirds to return were 20 Jan. in SF (SB), and an apparent Rufous Hummingbird was sighted on the 25th at CCFS, SCL (MR, MM).

All 3 Yellow-bellied Sapsucker reports were from the Ano Nuevo CBC on 4 Jan. — 1 at Pescadero (KHo, GHo) and 2 on private land (MH). A Red-naped Sapsucker was reported from Hidden Villa, SCL, on 15 Jan. (GHa). The *S.r. ruber* sapsucker continued in GGP, SF, all month (AH, RF, JW). Two "Yellow-shafted" Flickers were reported from Contra Costa Co. (TR, MT, DWi).

The Nutting's Flycatcher (*Myiarchus nuttingi*), discovered in a residential neighborhood of Santa Cruz on 1 Jan. and confirmed by a group of area experts on the 3rd drew many hundreds of birders, most of whom left with satisfying views of this 2nd state record. All was well until one out-of-state expert questioned the identification, particularly whether the bird was genetically pure. Much backdoor discussion has ensued, and at press time effort was being made to gather and analyze recordings of the bird's vocalizations. Perhaps it goes to show the mischief that can come from too many people staring at a bird too closely for too long! Stay tuned for further details.

Another *Myiarchus*, unidentified to species, was seen briefly at Half Moon Bay, SM, 26 Jan. (RT). A Tropical Kingbird lingered in Colma, SM, from its Dec. CBC discovery through the month of Jan. (mob). Two Yellow-billed Magpies roamed Pacifica, SM, seen on the 17th and 29th (JS, BN).

The Barn Swallow invasion did not come to fruition as fully as last year, but a number of the birds were recorded here, instead of in Latin America as they should have been — at least 12 from SM, SF, and SCL (mob). Tree Swallows were noted in SCL and SM as well, and a report of 5 Cliff Swallows from Bodega Bay, SON, (KG) awaits further documentation.

Wood Warbler Sightings

Nashville Warbler

2 Jan.	San Francisco Zoo, SF	DM
3 Jan.	GGP, SF	DW
12 Jan.	Half Moon Bay, SM	RT

Black-throated Gray Warbler

19 Jan.	Berkeley Aquatic Park, ALA	ES
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Hermit Warbler

12 Jan.	San Jose, SCL	AE
12 Jan.	Half Moon Bay, SM	RT
24 Jan.	Sutro Hts Park, SF	MU, HF

Palm Warbler

1 Jan.	S. San Francisco, SM (5 birds)	RT
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Wilson's Warbler

19 Jan.	Oakland, ALA	MRi
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Canada Warbler

Dec.-18 Jan.—?	SF Zoo, SF	mob
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Abbreviations for Observers: EB, Evan Barbour; EBI, Ellen Blustein; SB, Steven Bauer; HC, Hugh Cotter; TC, Ted Chandik; ADM, Al DeMartini; JD, Jim Danzenbaker; AE, Al Eisner; HF, Harry Fuller; RF, Rich

Ferrick; KG, Kate Gonnella; AH, Alan Hopkins; GHa, Garth Harwood; GHo, Grant Hoyt; HH, Hugh Harvey; JH, Jim Holmes; KHo, Karen Hoyt; MH, Merry Haveman; Chl, Chris Illes; Cyl, Cyndie Illes; DM, Dan Murphy; MM, Michael Mammoser; MMi, Marty Miracle; PM, Peter Metropulos; PMo, Pat Morris; YM, Yvonne McHugh; BN, Bess Nencio; DN, Dick Norton; JN, Jen Nercessian; AR, Alexandra Rose; BR, Bob Reiling; MR, Michael Rogers; MRi, Matt Ricketts; MRz, Mark Rauzon; TR, Ted Robertson; AS, Andrew Scivulo; DS, Doug Shaw; ES, Emilie Strauss; GS, Gary Strachan; JS, Judy Spittler; JT, Julie Thayer; MT, Marilyn Trabert; RT, Ronald S. Thorn; MU, Myra Ulvang; FV, Frank Vanslager; DW, Dave Weber; DWi, Denise Wight; JW, Jay Withgott; NW, Nat Weber; NWh, Nick Whelan.

Semicolons separate original observer(s) from subsequent observer(s). Abbreviation "mob" = many observers; "oob" = other observers. Information is compiled from BirdBox transcripts and regional listservs; the author apologizes for any errors or omissions.

Abbreviations for Counties and Others: ALA, Alameda; CBC, Christmas Bird Count; CC, Contra Costa; Cr., Creek; GGP, Golden Gate Park; L., Lake; LAS, Lassen; MER, Merced, MRN, Marin; MTY, Monterey; PLA, Placer; PRNS, Pt. Reyes National Seashore; Res., Reservoir; SB, State Beach; SCL, Santa Clara; SCZ, Santa Cruz; SF, San Francisco; SIS, Siskiyou; SJO, San Joaquin; SM, San Mateo; SOL, Solano; SON, Sonoma; SR, State Reserve.

The Sedge Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*) found in Dec. at Half Moon Bay SB, SM, remained throughout January. Only the 7th state record, many birders saw or heard this challenging little bird, and many others missed it. While on the subject of little birds, a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher was found on 4 Jan. on private land in SM (ADM). Single Townsend's Solitaires were noted, 4 Jan. in Moraga, CC (NW); and 25. Jan. at Mt. Tamalpais, MRN (AS).

Many birders were pleased to learn that the Gray Catbird (*Dumetella carolinensis*) that smashed itself into Barbara Cosse's window in Moss Beach, SM, in Dec., had survived. Ms. Cosse saw the bird again on 6 Jan., and it was then found on the 15th and for many days afterwards (PM, RT; mob). On Creed Rd., SOL, on 4 Jan., a Mountain Bluebird was found (HH).

Wood Warblers to Finches

The Canada Warbler at the San Francisco Zoo continued to be the region's most interesting warbler (see box). Ap-

parently its survival into January (at least through the 18th) makes it the first-ever North American record of this species for the month.

The Summer Tanager of Middle L., GGP, SF, reappeared on the 3rd after a long absence (DW). Out-of-season Western Tanagers were found at Belmont, SM (RF) and Edenvale Park, San Jose, SCL (MM). Four Swamp Sparrows were seen in SF, MRN, SCL, and SM.

Birders were treated to a true wilderness experience when a female Rusty Blackbird showed up in Sunnyvale, SCL, in a shopping center parking lot (Chl, Cyl). Many birders came to enjoy the scenery (I'm joking) and take in this handsome and striking (I'm not joking) first county record.

And last but never least, the finches. Small flocks of Red Crossbills were seen 11 Jan. atop Inverness Ridge, PRNS, MRN (NWh, JN) and at Ano Nuevo SR 18 Jan. (PM). And on the 17th, 6 Evening Grosbeaks flew into alders at the Bear Valley Vistors Center, PRNS, MRN (EBI). 

Improve your Birding Skills Through GGAS Birding Classes

We are pleased to announce that Alan Hopkins, GGAS past President, creator of our Save The Quail Campaign, one of the Bay Area's most experienced birders and a top birding tour leader, is offering three two-day classes (one day in the classroom and one day in the field) this spring and summer.

Indoor classes will begin at 7:30 p.m. at the Golden Gate Audubon Society classroom, 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley. Field trip locations are identified below. Indoor classes are two hours; field trip time varies according to location and content. There are no refunds on fees.

Learning Coastal California Bird Songs

Indoor class Wednesday, March 26

Field trip to Pescadero Marsh,

Saturday, March 30, three hours

Cost: \$50/person (\$55 non-members)

Can't tell the song of a Purple Finch from a House Finch? How about a Robin from a Grosbeak? In this class Alan Hopkins will teach ways to unravel the mysteries of local bird song identification.

Wildlife Gardening

Indoor class Wednesday, June 4

Field trip to Strybing Arboretum, in Golden Gate Park,

Saturday, June 7, two hours

Cost: \$50/person (\$55 non-members)

Learn to create a mini backyard ecosystem that will attract birds, butterflies and other wildlife. Join Barbara Deutsch and Alan Hopkins as they share their experience and the philosophy behind turning a yard into a wildlife sanctuary.

The Pelagic Experience

Indoor class, Wednesday, July 9

Field trip to Farallones Islands (date to be determined), all-day trip

Cost: \$50/person (\$55 non-members) plus cost of boat ride, to be determined as the date approaches

Just beyond San Francisco's breakers is an area as wild any place on earth. Like the Serengeti Plains, the Gulf of the Farallones Marine Sanctuary is home to man-eaters, the biggest animals on earth and one of the world's great migrations. In this class Alan Hopkins will present the basics of pelagic bird and mammal identification. He will also give tips on how to make the most of an ocean-going experience. Enrollment is limited to 15 people so that each participant can receive personal attention.

To register for the first two classes, please send your check, made payable to Golden Gate Audubon Society, to the GGAS office at the address below. Please provide your phone numbers and e-mail addresses.

We will register people for the Pelagic Experience class once we have a firm cost for the boat. You can give us your name now to reserve your place, but do not send any money at this time for that class.

To enroll by VISA or MasterCard, call the GGAS office at 510.843.2222 during our business hours (Tuesday to Friday, 9 a.m. - 4 p.m.).

Golden Gate Audubon Society
2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G
Berkeley, CA 94702

See you in class! 

Bird Count, continued from page 5

year, I was wishing I lived in the count area so I could be watching my yard for birds from the comfort of my living room! If you are interested in participating as a feeder watcher next year, please contact us and we will send you a special feeder watcher tally sheet.

A ***Selasphorus* sp. hummingbird** (either an Allens or rufous hummingbird) were seen again in the U.C. Botanical Garden for the eighth year in a row. Area Leaders Lillian Fujii and Steve Hayashi are wondering why we still make them write it up as an unusual sighting. A **red phalarope** was seen at the Elsie Romer Sanctuary in Alameda during Count Week. It has been seen in only two of the past 28 years.

Thanks to the faithful area leaders and new recruits. Consistency and knowledge of the areas produce the best results, so we hope our new leader will continue to lead for many more years. Thanks to Arthur Feinstein and Kathryn Blake at the GGAS office for their support. We are grateful to Susan Groves for arranging the catered meal, Ann Howard for setting up for the Countdown Dinner, and Diane Ahlgren for collecting money at the door. We appreciate the work of the Rare Bird Committee: John Luther and Luke Cole. Finally, a big round of applause to all who participated in the Count and shared their great stories over dinner. We hope to see you all next year on **Sunday, December 14, 2003!** 

Next year will be our last as compilers of the Oakland Count. We are looking for another person or two to work with us next year to "learn the ropes" and then take it over. If you are interested, call us at 510.494.1098.

Donations

Thank you for your continued generous response to our year-end fundraising appeal and our other conservation, education and membership activities!

Golden Eagle (\$1000 and more)

Charlotte Hill, Beryl Ness (Working Assets employee anniversary award), Allan Ridley

Peregrine Falcon (\$500 to \$1000)

Jane Dang*, Mara Melandry, Mary E. Schaefer

Least Tern (\$200 to \$500)

Anonymous, Suzanne Jones & Robert Elia (Gateway Valley), Mona F. Mena, Roger Mendelson, George S. Peyton, Jr. (Conservation & Bird Box)

Clapper Rail (\$100 to \$200)

Eugenia & Peter Caldwell (with matching donation from IBM Corp.), Pat Gannon (Alameda Education Program & FAWR), Jim & Ruth Gravanis, Dr. Jessica Krakow, John H. Lambert, John Langdell, Laurence & Sheila Malone, Joyce McKinney (Dog/Park issues), Audre W. Newman* (Latin America Committee-Education), Cora Pitcock, Dr. Mal Raff, Margit & Richard Roos-

Collins, Anne Ruffino, N. Selph, Alistair Sherret, Mr. & Mrs. J. W. Sindall

Gifts (to \$100)

John & Elsie Becker, Magnus B. Bennedsen, Scott Benson, Michael & Kay Berger, China Brotsky, Esther Clanon, Mike Cussen, Carol Dauben, Linda De Lucchi, Don Denison*, Dr. John Derdivanis, Ruth M. Doty, Tim Aaron Doyle, Mary Lou DuBois, Mark Eaton, Elizabeth & Bob Fisher, R. Dean Galoway, Albert Ghiorso, Rudolf Glauser, Gia Granucci, Roberta Guise, Robert N. Hall, Evangeline L. Hermanson, Dr. Donald Heyneman, Anne Hoff, David Holman, Diane Ichiyasu, Georgie Illingworth, Bob Isaacson, Elizabeth A. Jacobsohn, Ken Jorgensen, Alexander & Marie Karp, Beryl Kay, Nancy B. Kenyon, Caroline Kim, M.J. Kingery (Dog/Park issues), Linda S. Knight, Nancy Kreinberg, Enid & Irwin Leff, Douglas C. Leslie, Donald & Hilary Lim, Lynn MacDonald, Elaine McKinley, Sylvia McLaughlin, Cordelia Neal, Dee S. Pruy, Barbara Joan Randolph, Marcie Rubel & Michael Rufo, Dr. Lionel Schour, Mary Margaret Scribner, Ravinder Sehgal, Martha Ann Singer, W. L. Slessinger, Judith Ann Smith, Gerald Stone,

Anne Sussman*, William F. & Myra Ulvang, Liz Varnhagen, Kenneth D. Weisinger, Greg Welker, Sharon M. Wheeler, Katherine Youngmeister*

In Memoriam

Arlene Coggburn: Richard & Twila Brown, Honor Thompson
Bud Fry: Jane Dang
Leroy Nelson: George Homem
Merlin G. Sheldon: James & Evelyn Petersen and Family

In-Kind Donations

Peet's Coffee and Tea: Thanks to the Berkeley Domingo Avenue and San Francisco Laurel Village stores for donating coffee to the Oakland and San Francisco Christmas Bird Count Dinners.

* With GGAS Supporting Membership

A bequest to the Golden Gate Audubon Society helps make it possible for us to continue the good work we do in helping preserve our natural world for future generations. If you are interested in setting up a bequest, we have a team of experts who will be glad to help you. Please call Arthur Feinstein at our GGAS office for more information. Our phone number is 510.843.2222. Thanks.

NOMINATIONS FOR GGAS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MAIL BALLOT DUE APRIL 17

The Nominating Committee of the GGAS Board of Directors is pleased to nominate the following candidates for elected positions on the Board for 2003-2004. The new directors will take office at the Annual Meeting in May. GGAS members in good standing may vote by completing and signing the form of ballot printed below and returning it to the GGAS Office at 2530 San Pablo Avenue, Suite G, Berkeley, CA 94702, by the ballot deadline, **April 17, 2003**. Ballots received by April 17 will be counted in accordance with the choice specified for each candidate. Thirty-five ballots are needed to meet the quorum requirement of the GGAS Bylaws.

Position	Nominee	Yes	No
Second Vice President	Carolyn Kolka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Recording Secretary	Patricia Gannon	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Corresponding Secretary	Carolyn Kolka	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Treasurer	Al Peters	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
West Bay Director	Bob Bennett (<i>term ending '06</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
West Bay Director	Nancy Smith (<i>term ending '04</i>)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Member signature _____

Volunteer Opportunity

East Bay Regional Park District Representative

Russ Wilson, who has represented Golden Gate Audubon at East Bay Regional Park District meetings for the past 20 years, has retired. His advocacy on behalf of open space and wildlife habitat in the parks has been invaluable to us. It is extremely important that someone pick up his work.

The main involvement with EBRPD is attending their Board of Directors meetings. These meetings are open to the public, and are held on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday afternoons each month, at the Park District Headquarters near the Oakland Zoo. Issues of concern to GGAS range from fuel breaks, balancing habitat preservation with recreation facilities, feral cats, off-leash dogs and cattle over-grazing to mountain bikes on single-track trails. Russ spoke up for GGAS at these meetings and reported to the Conservation Committee on Park District issues the second Monday evening of each month in the GGAS offices.

With 59 parks covering 91,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties, it's imperative to have GGAS represented at the meetings to show our concern about maintaining open space and wildlife habitat. Please call or e-mail Jacqui Smalley, 510.655.0998, smalleyj@pacbell.net to volunteer for this position. 

Film on Wild Parrots

The Concert and Lecture Series at City College of San Francisco will host a sneak preview screening of a new nonfiction feature film entitled *The Wild Parrots of Telegraph Hill* on Wednesday, April 2nd, 2003 at 7 pm in the Diego Rivera Theater. The film is produced and directed by GGAS member Judy Irving, who will answer questions after the screening. The film is a documentary portrait of Mark Bittner, a Bohemian St. Francis, who befriended a flock of wild cherry-headed conures (red-masked parakeets) on the Greenwich Steps

For further information or a map contact Stephanie Lyons, the Coordinator of the Concert and Lecture Series, at 415.239.3580. 

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

As a member of National Audubon Society, you are automatically enrolled in the local chapter, Golden Gate Audubon Society. Chapter benefits include receipt of *The Gull*, access to field trips and programs, and the opportunity to volunteer. Call the office if you have any questions.

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